

Congressman Jesse L. Jackson, Jr., called on the Bush administration to increase its support of international HIV/AIDS programs in sub-Saharan Africa. Jackson said, "Sub-Saharan Africa has been more severely affected by AIDS than any other part of the world." Today, during a congressional hearing on the international HIV/AIDS budget, Mr. Jackson continued his campaign to promote eradicating HIV/AIDS from the African continent. He encouraged Randall Tobias, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, to employ "the right dollars in the right direction" in the global fight against HIV/AIDS.

Jackson said, "The president is not spending enough money in enough of the right places to effectively combat HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. I have serious concerns that much of the money designated for Africa goes through the President's plan, which funds only a few countries rather than all of the African countries that are afflicted by HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS relief goals and objectives should utilize input from all affected countries."

At the hearing, Congressman Jackson was particularly concerned that President Bush had directed the Global AIDS Coordinator's office to concentrate AIDS relief on only 15 countries. Again Jackson said, "Countries continue to experience alarmingly high adult HIV infection rates. For example, Swaziland has an adult HIV infection rate of 38.8 percent, Lesotho - 28.9 percent, Zimbabwe - 24.6 percent, and Malawi - 14.2 percent. None of these nations receive funding under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). In fact, of the top four countries with the world's highest adult HIV/AIDS infection rates, only one of them would receive funding under the president's plan."

Despite the AIDS Coordinator's evasive answers regarding HIV/AIDS prevention, Congressman Jackson secured a public assurance that additional monies would be committed in 2005 and 2006 to support the growing need in Africa.

Congressman Jackson has served on the House Appropriations Committee for six years. He currently sits on the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs, which funds international HIV/AIDS programs.